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Contents

D O W N T O W N *The Builders & Ideas Transforming* N



A City in Transition
to a Distinctive Saskatoon Style

25 The Past is Prologue

29 2nd Avenue

31 Rumley

33 King George

35 T. Eaton

37 Fairbanks



7 Frontlines

City Presents 2008 Heritage Awards
Gustin House Designated Heritage Property
CMHC Predicts 18 percent Hike in Home Values
Saskatchewan Housing Market to Lead the Nation in 2008
Saskatchewan Breaks Record, Leads Nation in Building Permits
City Ranking Drops Among Affordable Places To Live

11 Style

The Beauty of Restoration
Updating the Look of an Old Home through Professional Renovation

13 Profile

Sibling Sales Sensation
Brothers Typify Fresh Realty Approach

15 Décor

Rethinking the Kitchen
Updates That Won't Sink Your Budget

17 Greenery

The Saskatoon Garden
Of Planning, Edibles and Easy Care

41 The Room

Great Rooms
Great for Entertaining

45 Suppliers

Great Openings
Exploring Door Options

47 Ecoliving

Improve Your Home
Improve Your Energy Savings

49 Showcase

Modern Meets Traditional in Award-Winning Design

53 Tipsheet

Painting Made Simple
The Easiest Way to Transform Your Home

55 Practical

Permits and Programs
City Hall Has What You Need

59 Backwords

Time for a Change
Downtown Regeneration is a Positive Direction

Cover: A.T. Eaton Warehouse Loft. Unless noted otherwise, all stories and photographs in Saskatoon Home are by Darrell Noakes

The City is Changing

HOME

The publication of this magazine would not have been possible without the foresight and dedication of a number of people. That's especially true in the case of Susan Zwarych, whose vision and commitment both as a builder and now as the president of Mondovi Publishing, demonstrate her dedication to the home building community, and to the future of the vibrant city of Saskatoon. We would also especially like to acknowledge the organizational and creative work of Darrell Noakes, who contributed the bulk of the writing and photography for this is-

sue, and mobilized his considerable contacts in the city, including the City of Saskatoon administration, who has been generous in their support of our efforts. This issue also demonstrates the expert craftsmanship of Dona Sturmanis, our senior editor, who commissioned and edited the features and departments that appear here. Magazines, in order to reach their full potential, are collaborative enterprises, and the team we've put together for this one is testament to their skills and expertise.

Most importantly, it is the builders, developers, designers

and suppliers whose work graces the city, and these pages, that make it possible for us to celebrate the quality homes they have created. They are in large part the reason that Saskatoon is gaining a reputation for breaking the boundaries of design, and creating exciting, innovative and environmentally sensitive homes and landscapes. The magazine exists to showcase this work and present it to residents as well as the many families choosing to relocate here.

In the issues of Saskatoon Home we will be publishing over the coming years, we intend celebrate the ideas, work, and results of the best design and construction companies, as well as the service companies that support the builder and renovator industry. We ask you to support our efforts, and those of the advertisers who grace these pages.

This issue focuses on the exciting new developments that are reshaping the downtown of Saskatoon and how the richness of the past is influencing the vision of the future.

We sincerely welcome your comments on the stories we present and we invite you to suggest future ideas and projects that should be covered.

Robert MacDonald
Publisher, Editor, Designer

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Frontlines

City Presents 2008 Heritage Awards

Saskatoon city council honoured seven winners of the 2008 Municipal Heritage Awards February 19. The awards, presented every two years, acknowledge the efforts of those who preserve and restore local historical properties.

"The Heritage Awards ensure the preservation and restoration of buildings of heritage value in our community," said municipal heritage advisory committee chair Joseph-Michel Fortier. "The Volunteer Award recognizes an individual well known in both the heritage community and in Saskatoon for their zealous efforts to preserve and protect our built heritage and to enrich Saskatoons heritage profile."

Winners:

Adaptive Reuse:

- MFD Warehouse Restorations / T. Eaton Warehouse Condominium, 211 Avenue D South (James D. Zimmer Architect)
- Bottomley House, 1118 College Drive (Dennis and Louise Coates)

Infill Private Residence:

- Gaudet Residence, 1004 Duke

Street (Ted and Susan Gaudet)

Infill Public/Commercial:

- The Hideaway, 320 11th Street East (Meridian Development Corp.)

Heritage Spaces:

- Market Square, Southwest corner of 19th Street and Avenue A (Stantec Consulting Ltd.)

Honorable Mention:

Restoration-Exterior Public/Commercial:

- Woolworth Building, 220 21st Street East (James D. Zimmer Architect)
- Villagio Complex, 703 – 719 14th Street East (Meridian Development Corp.)

Heritage Award for Volunteer Public Service:

- Dianne Wilson, for her long-term dedication and commitment to the cause of heritage preservation.

■ CITY OF SASKATOON

Gustin House to be Designated Heritage Property

As part of Heritage Week, February 18 to 22, the Saskatchewan government announced it will formally designate the Gustin House, located at 512 10th Street East, as a provincial heritage property.

The Gustin House was the

home and studio of Dr. Lyell Gustin, a renowned music teacher and founding member of the Saskatchewan Registered Music Teachers' Association who taught for more than 60 years. The Lyell Gustin Piano Studios became known nationally and internationally for musical excellence.

The designation includes the Trounce House, the oldest surviving structure in the city. The Trounce House originally stood at the front of the lot, but was moved to the rear and converted to a garage when Gustin House was built in 1920.

The Gustin House and the Trounce House were designated as a municipal heritage property in 1989. ■ GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CMHC Predicts 18 percent Hike in Home Values

A report from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) predicts that Saskatoon's resale housing prices will be the highest in the province, rising by 18 per cent in 2008. The CMHC first quarter housing market outlook report, released February 4,

projects that selling prices will reach an average of \$275,000 for the year. By 2009, the average price of a resale home could reach \$297,500.

Province-wide, average house prices are predicted to jump 26 per cent to \$220,000 this year and a further eight per cent to \$238,000 in 2009. Last year, the average resale price increased 32 per cent to \$174,000 on demand and investment dollars.

Saskatchewan's strong housing demand in 2007 was attributed to steady economic growth, a healthy employment situation and gains in net migration, the report noted. Total housing starts reached 6,007 units in 2007, the highest level in 24 years. However, CMHC expects escalating costs will push housing starts down to 5,600 units in 2008 and 5,300 in 2009. The average Multiple Listing Service (MLS) price in Saskatchewan will rise by 31.7 per cent during 2007, 26.4 per cent in 2008 and 8.2 per cent in 2009, the report noted.

Nationally, existing home sales are forecast to reach about 520,000 units in 2007, a 7.6 per cent increase over 2006. In 2008 the level of MLS sales is expected to fall by 3.9 per cent to 499,650 units, while 2009

will see an additional decrease to 488,300. Growth in the average MLS price has remained high at 10.6 per cent in 2007, mainly because of continued strong price pressures in Canada's western provinces. However, as most resale markets move toward more balanced conditions, growth in average MLS price is forecast to slow to 5.2 per cent in 2008 and 3.8 per cent in 2009.

■ CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Saskatchewan Housing Market to Lead the Nation in 2008

Saskatchewan will set real estate records this year, housing market analysts predicted at Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Saskatchewan Housing Outlook Conference held at Saskatoon's Radisson Hotel in February. Speakers and conference participants discussed the economic, demographic and financial factors affecting Saskatchewan's housing markets over the next year.

"Fuelled by one of the strongest economies in Canada, Saskatchewan housing markets can

look forward to another exceptional performance this year," said Richard Corriveau, regional economist for CMHC. "Resale transactions are expected to set a new record in 2008, while new home starts will be among the highest in 25 years. This rapid pace of activity will continue to exert upward pressure on prices."

"Price growth in the province's new and resale markets should lead the nation over the next few years," he said. Corriveau cautions that "price escalation will take its toll on demand in 2009, leading to a slight decline in starts and sales."

"Look for another strong year of new housing construction in

both Regina and Saskatoon for 2008," says Paul Caton, senior market analyst for Saskatchewan. "Builders have the largest number of units now under construction in decades and will be rushing to complete them so that home buyers can move in. On the resale side, listings remain at all-time lows and strong demand persists, suggesting rapidly escalating prices in both 2008 and 2009," Caton says.

The conference also featured discussions on the rental market and condominium conversion trends in Saskatchewan.

■ CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION SASKATCHEWAN



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Saskatchewan Breaks Record Leads Nation in Building Permits

If Saskatchewan's construction sites seem busier than ever these days, new figures indicate why.

Saskatchewan led all provinces in residential construction growth and overall construction growth in 2007, according to a report issued by Statistics Canada in February. Overall construction growth rose 42 per cent in the past year, while residential construction growth was up by an astonishing 74 per cent. In comparison, Newfoundland and Labrador had the second highest increase in residential construction at just 30 per cent.

Premier Brad Wall said the new figures show that Saskatchewan's economy continues to gain strength and that Saskatchewan people are benefiting from the economic momentum.

"The residential construction growth shows that families are building new homes and the commercial construction growth shows that business are expanding and creating new jobs in our province," Wall said. "Both are clear signs that Saskatchewan is on a roll."

In December alone, the total value of building permits hit a record high of \$217 million, an increase of 83 per cent over November and the largest

month-over-month increase of any province.

"Building permits and the capital investment required are signs of a strong and growing economy and confidence in the future," Wall said. "Our government is committed to sustaining a positive economic climate and continuing our economic momentum." ■ GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatoon Drops Among Affordable Places To Live

Saskatoon's ranking in an annual survey of affordable places to live across the globe has taken a dive, as recently reported.

The Fourth Annual Demographia Housing Affordability Survey, released January 28, ranked 227 cities in Canada, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Britain and the Republic of Ireland by comparing residents' incomes and housing prices.

Last year's survey found Saskatoon the 15th most affordable city of those ranked. This year, its position plummeted to No. 77 on the list, tied with Limerick, Ireland, with house prices rising to about 3.5 times a family's gross income.

The survey considers homes in the urban centres affordable if the city's median house price

is less than three years' median income.

That positions Saskatoon as the 11th least affordable Canadian city, making home ownership further out of reach than in Ottawa, Quebec City, Halifax or Winnipeg.

The ranking bumps Saskatoon from "affordable" to well down the list of "moderately unaffordable" places.

Statistics Canada reported Saskatchewan as having the greatest year-to-year increases in house prices in Canada.

In 2007, the price of an average Saskatoon house rose 50 per cent, selling for an average \$250,000.

House prices being too expensive for the average resident is bad news, the survey points out.

"These higher costs have serious social implications," the authors write. "In the markets where extraordinary inflation has occurred, living standards are not likely to be sustainable. Further, many ethnic-minority households, with their generally lower incomes are likely to find the dream of home ownership put out of reach."

Home ownership, on the other hand, creates wealth, greater financial security and independence, the authors say.



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Your New Hometown...

The crack of a bat from a nearby ball diamond. The taste of watermelon at a community picnic. Neighbours chatting over the backyard fence. Whatever images you have of small-town life, prepare to live them out in Hampton Village.

Located in Saskatoon's northwest, Hampton Village is the first neighbourhood of its kind on Saskatoon's west side. The hub of the community is the Village Centre, complete with gathering spaces, recreational facilities, plus the shops and services needed to support village life.

A variety of street, lot and home styles to suit any lifestyle will be interwoven with green spaces and pedestrian walkways to create a sense of connectedness and security. For a small-town feel with city convenience, it takes a village – Hampton Village.

LOTS of information. JUST ASK!

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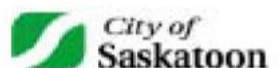
Imagine a neighbourhood that is designed to promote a sense of community. A place where you will want to meet your neighbours, where you feel safe and where you and your family will not just live, but build a home and a history.

Willowgrove is an exciting new neighbourhood located in the northeast of Saskatoon. It offers a variety of diverse housing styles to meet the needs of today's family, lifestyle and personal preferences.

Designed around a village square, Willowgrove has a feeling of being in a small town unto itself. It's a community where everyone feels welcome and where you belong.

LOTS of information. JUST ASK!

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Style

The Beauty of Restoration Updating the Look of an Old Home through Professional Renovation

If you've ever thought of renovating your home, you probably have a long list of changes you want to make. Yet, it's easy to overlook the character that drew you to where you live in the first place. Renovating can allow you to update, while keeping your domicile's personality. If previous renovations have changed its appearance, it's never too late to bring back the original look and charm.

Dave Anderchek is president of J.A.B.A. Construction Limited. With nearly 30 years' experience in Saskatoon, Anderchek knows what homeowners want, whether it's for construction or renovation purposes: advice and direction.

Anderchek prefers to meet homeowners at their residences, where they can describe what they want to accomplish with their renovation. Working over a series of meetings, the renovator and homeowner pinpoint the areas of the house to be updated and work on a design for the project.



"Anytime you do a renovation, you still want to maintain the look or style of that home," he says. "You can always maintain the character of a home."

Often, it's necessary to match existing features of the house, such as trim or sills. Sometimes, custom millwork is needed.

"When I did the renovation to the church in Stanley Mission, we had to keep the charac-

ter of the existing structure," says Anderchek. "I had to make and do all kinds of stuff that I did right on site to match what was in the existing church that was built in the 1800s."

"A lot of homeowners want their walls knocked out to make wide open areas," he says. "If it's an older home, they probably hold up the floor upstairs. If it's a single-storey home built in the 50s and early 60s and they want to knock out a wall between their kitchen and living room, chances are it's a supporting wall that holds the roof up."

That means getting a structural engineer to assess the load-bearing components of the house, then having design drawings made before any work is done.

"We still maintain the character and aesthetics of the home," says Anderchek, "but the homeowners have their wide open area."

For some residential renovation projects, an architect can bring out a house's character. Heney Klypak is one of the principals of Klypak Rusick Architects in Saskatoon. On many of the projects he's been called in to work on, his main challenge is to restore a home that looks "out of place."

"This is one I did many years ago," Klypak says, referring to a collection of photographs on his desk. "I was hired to make this thing better, make it blend in with the rest of the neigh-



bourhood.” The home in the photo has an ungainly addition and mismatched siding.

Another picture shows a home that matches the style of other buildings in the neighbourhood.

“That’s what it turned out to be. This is basically the same, but changing the materials, changing the windows and reworking the front entrance made it a lot more desirable. I received a municipal heritage award for this one.”

“One of the things architects bring to the table, is the process in working with the client,” he says. “We go through a process to help extract what their lifestyle is all about, what they do, how they live, what things they do most in their home. We base it on function.”



Above: The main floor was opened up by removing the wall between the kitchen and dining room, then a freshly designed kitchen was created. Photograph by Perry Van Dongen courtesy of J.A.B.A. Construction

Left: Lindsay Fuchs and Dave Anderchek of J.A.B.A. Construction. The company brings more than 20 years of renovation experience to the Saskatchewan market.

“We think about how the furniture is laid out in that space. We think about the view, the lighting, window placement, the overall feel of the home.”

Klypak also says an architect will help the owner find a contractor to complete the renovation project and perform inspections so that the quality is up to par.

Whatever your renovation project, it pays to have professionals do the work. ■

Profile

Sibling Sales Sensation Brothers Typify Saskatoon's Fresh Realty Approach

Gregg and Ryan Bamford, known professionally as The Bamford Brothers, are showing how youthful exuberance and hard work can open a lot of doors for young professionals. When Gregg joined Re/Max two years ago, he was one of the youngest realtors in Saskatoon. Since then, many other young people have followed his lead, including his brother Ryan who recently came on board.

"Being a realtor seemed like a great fit. I've always enjoyed helping people, and the lifestyle that comes with the job fits my personality," says Ryan. "It's a lot of hard work, but it's always worth it at the end of the day. I never have trouble going to work each morning, and I think that says a lot."

Gregg echoes the sentiments of his brother. "We have a lot of fun with our work," says Gregg. "And really, there is no better time than now to be heading down this path in our city."

Saskatoon is undeniably on its way to becoming a vibrant Western Canadian metropolis. A



booming economy is helping to morph the once humble town into an urban centre full of cultural diversity catering to the lifestyles young professionals crave.

New restaurants, condo conversions, and upscale loft developments are some of the things happening in Saskatoon right now, which seemed foreign to the community not too long ago.

"A lot of our clients are moving here from other big cities, and other provinces," says Gregg. "And it's really nice to see people start to recognize the value of Saskatoon. We're competing with a lot of other places to live right now, and it's exciting to experience this kind of growth when we struggled to keep people at home for so long."

These changes have made

purchasing homes difficult for a lot of home buyers in many ways. Gregg and Ryan are professionally dedicated to helping people prepare themselves to buy in such a competitive market.

"It's an intricate process. We spend a lot of time with our clients finding out exactly what they need and planning ways to help them get it," says Ryan. "It's important we build strong relationships with our clients. If they're happy, we're happy."

On the flip side, there are a lot of things people need to keep in mind when selling their houses. While selling properties may seem a lot easier now than in the past, Gregg feels people need to recognize that it is still a very competitive market.

"It's important that people

seek the right professional advice before selling their property. Otherwise it's very easy for them to miss out on capturing the top value of their home."

Having been brought up in Saskatoon, the brothers are eager to see the city succeed in its long term growth. They are committed to helping people share in everything Saskatoon has to offer. With their professional skills and experience, they want to bridge the gap between buyers and sellers to make the process comfortable for both in a changing market.

"We've worked hard to get where we are. We might be young now, but we'll be meeting our clients' needs for years to come."

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Rethinking the Kitchen

Updates that Won't Sink Your Budget

The kitchen is the new show-room of the home. Not only is it where food preparation takes place, but it's where people like to congregate.

There are a few things you can do yourself in your kitchen to make it more stylish and inviting while also achieving the best bang for your buck. Here are some ideas as suggested by Leslie Segrete of *While You Were Out* and *Trading Spaces*.

Freshen the Flooring

There are a variety of easy-to-install, inexpensive and great-looking flooring materials available. Laminate floors offer looks that replicate wood grains, natural stones and tile, and are easily installed in large sections. Engineered hardwood flooring is also a great choice for a kitchen since it can stand up to wear and tear and moist environments. Plus, with new, innovative locking systems, this can be an easy DIY project.

Complement the Cabinets

Updating your cabinets can be



the ideal starting point for a fresh look. Begin by removing all the cabinet doors, drawers and hardware. For solid wood cabinets, strip, sand, repair and clean the wood to create a clean surface. Then, apply a new stain and urethane top coat. For a completely different look, replace the cabinet doors for a refreshing style. Laminate or wood veneer cabinets can easily be updated with a fresh coat of paint. For the final touch, replace your knobs and drawer pulls with new, updated finishes.

Accessorize at the Sink

Installing a new faucet can add updated style and enhanced functionality. Faucets today

Freshly stained wood cabinets add elegance to a contemporary kitchen. Photo courtesy News Canada.

come in a wealth of designs. You may want to add one of the most popular styles, a high-arc faucet. This style offers practical ease for tasks such as filling large pots or pitchers and its prominence makes it a design focal point. Or you may want to try a highly functional pullout faucet. Featuring multiple spray settings at your fingertips, these faucets make everything from watering plants to cleaning veggies a breeze.

Creating Lovely Lighting

Accent your current lighting with stylish, new pieces. Swap out the basic light fixture from

above your kitchen table with a beautiful chandelier for a great focal point. To aid in tasks, pendant lights can be added above prep areas to highlight the spots you use most often. For an ambient glow, vintage wall sconces work well as a great addition to an Old-World kitchen or contrast in a modern kitchen.

"With these updates," says Segrete, "your kitchen will soon be transformed and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you did it yourself and without spending a fortune."

Add the Latest Kitchen Accessories

Stylish extras give your guests the impression they have stepped into a gourmet kitchen, even if you're not a gourmet chef.

Kitchen Aids

Make a dramatic statement with commercial-grade cooking tools. Add a hearth-stone oven to make wood-fired pizza and artisan breads in your own kitchen. For extraordinary roasting, look to a commercial-style rotisserie for delicious duck, lamb or chicken. Or, since gourmet chefs seldom do the heavy lifting when cooking up

their eclectic cuisine, add a pot filler that mounts to the wall above your cook top or range. This handy appliance can extend up to two feet to deliver hot or cold water directly into your pots and pans. When it's not in use, the pot filler folds neatly against the wall for an understated, yet upscale, look.

See Double

Two is always better than one. And now the double oven, long a staple in gourmet kitchens, has gone high-tech. New turbo ovens are available that use forced air and microwave technology for significantly quicker cooking.

And seeing double also means double-duty conven-



ience. Install a drawer dishwasher in your island prep station for quick clean-up, while your main dishwasher does the heavy-duty work. Add warming or refrigeration drawers to aid in

Potfillers are extendable faucets that can be folded against a wall when not in use. Photo courtesy News Canada.

the food preparation process, too, and added convenience will be just an arm's length away.

Wine Not?

The ideal temperature for wine storage is 10 to 13 degrees Celsius, with moderately damp and dark conditions. Since most kitchens are designed to be welcoming and cheery, you may want to consider adding your own wine cellar. As a stand-alone room that can hold up to 500 bottles, or a smaller refrigerated unit that preserves 10, there are a host of options to keep your wine collection easily accessible and perfectly stored.

New options, new products and new luxurious products ensure that the sky is the limit when designing the gourmet kitchen of your dreams.

■ COURTESY OF NEWS CANADA

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Greenery

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An ideal garden doesn't happen by accident – it takes vision and rigorous planning. Just ask Betsy Rosenwald and her husband, John Penner.

Their City Park home occupies a double lot, offering the perfect property for a couple passionate about gardening. Reflecting a growing trend, the couple replaced much of their lawn with trees, shrubs, perennials and walkways.

"It's more of a European garden concept," she says. "Less yard and more living space. It's a work-in-progress that creates a living space for the summer." Penner grew up on a Saskatchewan farm, Rosenwald in New York City. Their approach to gardening couldn't have been more different.

"I basically had a couple of plants in my apartment," says Rosenwald. "My husband is much more plant-savvy. He's more interested in drawing things out. I have a more organic approach."

She says if she and her husband were to create their garden from scratch again, the shrubs



and trees would have been planted first because they form the primary area around which the rest of the beds can be planned.

Janet Wanner, owner of Saskatoon residential landscaping firm Gentle Earth Design Studio, stresses that planning and designing your garden is important. This time of year – before the greenhouses open – is a good time to do it.

If you're really on top of it,

winter is the best time to do that planning. Browse gardening and seed catalogues during the cold months as well as the internet and local library, which have good resources for garden lovers. If you didn't do it this past season, plan to do so next year.

But in the meantime, when April rolls around in Saskatoon, the snow has melted and it's a good time to visualize how your garden will look in the summer.

A well designed garden completely transforms a yard and complements the home. Many Saskatoon homeowners are embracing trends for lower maintenance and greater enjoyment. More families are using their gardens to entertain guests or to create a living space outdoors. A garden like this one in City Park doesn't have to happen overnight, but planning is key to making it happen. Photos by Betsy Rosenwald and John Penner.

You'll be able to make more appropriate choices when you visit the greenhouses opening in May.

If your garden plans include landscaping, it's a good idea to find out where your underground services are located. Underground gas, water, sewer, electrical and telephone lines need to be marked before you start.

You'll need time to make arrangements if your plan identifies materials that need to be brought in or work that needs to be contracted. Concrete and fencing contractors, for example, are in high demand. You won't be able to plant until your landscaping is done, so you'll need to book early.

If you want a professional designer to help plan your garden, it's helpful to provide a surveyor's certificate, says Wanner.



Top Trends

Wanner notices that fruit-bearing plants such as apple and cherry trees, as well as raspberry patches, are becoming popular in Saskatoon gardens.

"One trend that's coming back is salad gardens," she says. "A lot of people don't have a large yard and they don't want a whole garden, but they want a space in their yard for these."

People fond of barbecuing like the convenience of a fresh herb patch, which can easily be incorporated into a flower bed.

The Saskatoon Horticultural Society notes the Saskatoon trend toward gardens that are easier to care for.

"People don't want to have to put a lot of work into their gar-



den," says society president Angie Skiba. "I think more are going to a xeriscape [low watering] type, which is low maintenance."

Skiba notices that more people are switching to perennials because they are easier to care for than annuals. Not only do they cut down on the maintenance involved, but also can reduce expense, as annuals are getting pricey.

Saskatoon homeowners are now viewing gardens as outdoor

extensions of their homes, a North American trend.

"They are entertaining outside in the summer months," says Skiba. "So now they're planning seating areas, patios and that sort of thing."

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306.242.2320

Top Tip: Prepare your soil well when planting or starting your gardens.

Saskatchewan Perennial Society
www.14.brinkster.com/saskperennial
The Gardener for the Prairies Magazine

www.gardenermagazine.ca
306.477.5593



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Discovering a Distinctive New Saskatoon Style



Saskatoon has a style that you can feel. It's the only city that I chose – really *chose* – to call home. Most of us don't get to choose where we live. More often than not, our work dictates where we live; we move to where we can find a job or pursue a career.

Many of us stay where we grew up; we like the places that were familiar to us when we were young, but the choice was really our parents'. In fact, we do tend to look subconsciously for cities, neighbourhoods and houses that resemble the places of our childhood, wherever we live. Saskatoon is very dissimilar to the B.C. southern interior town where I grew up.

That's not to say that people don't like where they live. Of course they do. What I am saying is that something about Saskatoon drew me here, something about this city that no other city has. It's a quality that, until I began working on the stories for this magazine, I could never quite put my finger on, but a quality that nonetheless resonated strongly with me

on a sunny August day nearly three decades ago. It's a quality that too many of us take for granted.

First impressions are visual. There was something about the way Saskatoon looked. The city had a cohesiveness and integration to it. It was easy to figure out where you were and to find your way to other parts of the city. Here was a city that had avoided the endless, depressing sprawl, leap-frog development and dysfunctional growth that was characteristic of so many cities that I have lived in or visited. The city had a style and vitality that made it unique.

As I've learned in the years since, the attraction that I saw in Saskatoon was not in my imagination and it was no accident. Since the 1950s, as a post-war generation came to grips

with unprecedented rates of urban and economic growth, Saskatoon decided that growth could be managed. By the mid-1960s, the city could be described as a leader in the concept of suburban development areas, placing a strong emphasis on distinct neighbourhoods and an orderly model of neighbourhood planning. It meant that every neighbourhood could nurture its own sense of community, as part of a larger community. It's a process that continues today.

It helped, too, that we had a land bank. Talk about making lemonade when life hands you lemons: property forfeited during the Great Depression and other times of bust, and more recently acquired through purchase, has been used for directing future growth and development.

The prairie landscape must influence our style. Every prairie city feels like it took a big breath and stretched out its arms; only Saskatoon took a deeper breath and stretched a little wider. Our streets convey a sense of ease and openness, all the better to see and interact with our built environment. Our built environment is one worth seeing. We have a beautiful downtown, bordered on the east and south sides by wilderness. Each neighbourhood has its own charm. We had the foresight to establish green space throughout the city. Still, it's always good to keep the things we cherish within our reach. Saskatoon, like other prairie cities, has a compactness to it. You know where the city ends. Not so, for most metropolitan areas in North America.

We've been fortunate to have retained much of our heritage and have continued to express our own style. Drive – or better yet, walk – around any neighbourhood and you'll see the many ways in which citizens have stamped their individuality and carved out their own vision. Sure, some are a little kitschy, like bicycle wheel whirligigs. But you'll also see gardens that thumb their noses at conformity in other ways: landscaping in harmony with the prairie environment, backyard forests that provide a tranquil retreat from urban life. It's hard not to let your actions be constrained by contemporary expectations – houses in most neighbourhoods tend to look pretty much alike, in whatever style was popular at the time. Look closer, and you'll see outstanding examples of workmanship, clearly the expression of the builder's individuality, as I did recently in the stone foundations of some early Nutana homes. In every neighbourhood there are houses that display a style that could only come from the owners' touch.

We're now beginning to see that style expressed in ways we've never seen before in this city: the conversion of warehouses and old, disused buildings into vibrant residential loft suites; infill development that shows remarkable ingenuity; a small but growing trend toward individually designed homes.

Our style defines Saskatoon. It's what makes this city shine.

■ DARRELL NOAKES



The Past is

How Turning the Old into the New Is Transforming Downtown

Prologue

If all goes according to plan, Saskatoon's goal is to double the downtown residential population from 5,000 in 1997 to 10,000 over 25 years.

For nearly a decade, Saskatoon's warehouse district has been quietly changing. One of the city's oldest industrial neighbourhoods is now considered the ultimate location for development of fashionable residential lofts. Classic, historic buildings such as the Rumely and Fairbanks-Morse are already experiencing this exciting conversion and others, like the city-owned John Deer and Arthur Cook, could follow.

On paper, Saskatoon's downtown is defined as the area south of 25th Street and east of Idylwyld Drive, with the river providing the eastern and southern boundaries. The warehouse district takes up the northwest corner – south to 22nd Street and east to about 1st Avenue.

Our mental map of an area does not usually conform to lines drawn on paper, however. Rather, it's based on how we perceive them, such as personal preference, experience and practical use. In my mind, the her-

itage ambience of the warehouse district extends east and south through the historic centre of downtown, and threads westward to Caswell Hill, including the corner of 23rd Street and 2nd Avenue. This was at one time the centre of downtown, where the former Hudson's Bay Store and King George Hotel are adding to the new and exciting residential and business transformation. On my mental map, the area also includes the T. Eaton Warehouse on Avenue D at 23rd Street. I don't at all find it surprising that Saskatoon's first loft conversions are taking place in this area.

"Our old industrial engine was adjacent to the railway," says Alan Wallace, the City of Saskatoon's manager of neighbourhood planning. "The railway passes right through Pleasant Hill and Caswell Hill. The railway was a spine. Everything grew off of that.

"The warehouse district had more than just warehouses. It had factories. Rumely

built tractors there. What has been left behind is a cluster of these old, large, solid buildings. And they've been re-used throughout the years.

"Now, the demographic trend and the economic trend is to convert these into residential space. All across the country and in the United States, zoning codes have been changed to allow that to happen."

That includes Saskatoon, where more mixed-use zoning categories have eliminated and replaced the old zoning.

"Industrial meant no residential, so you couldn't convert the Fairbanks-Morse, you couldn't convert the Rumely," says Wallace. "Now that's changed. We had to shift our thinking."

The city adopted a "housing first" strategy, aimed at developing a more compact urban form. This means flexible development standards to allow conversion of designated heritage buildings into residential



units, encouraging high and medium density multiple-unit dwellings to be located in and near the downtown.

At the moment, warehouse-to-loft conversions are attracting the most attention, but a wide range of housing styles is possible, including mid-rise apartments and live-work conversions in older warehouses or upper floors of commercial buildings. For example, a series of these is set to start construction this summer on the south side of the T. Eaton Warehouse lofts.

Other factors, referred to in the city's downtown plan as redevelopment catalysts, will also determine the neighbourhood's future. Chief among these is the extension of 25th Street between 1st Avenue and Idylwyld Drive, which will create more entry points into the enigmatic neighbourhood, paving the way for additional residential and mixed-use development north of 24th Street. The City Yards will have to be moved or consolidated to make room. A new off-street central platform transit terminal is

being considered nearby. Design incentives will focus on conserving and interpreting the heritage flavour of the neighbourhood.

If all goes according to plan, Saskatoon's goal is to double the downtown residential population from 5,000 in 1997 to 10,000 over 25 years by stimulating the construction of 3,500 new units – about 140 per year. Much of it will take place in and adjacent to the warehouse district. Current developments are adding 195 units downtown and another 30 four blocks away at Caswell Hill.

The growing population will create demand for new public amenities, such as physical and visual connections between the downtown and the river. Already, there's talk that a grocery store and specialty food markets could locate downtown to serve this new residential population, less than four years after Extra Foods on 3rd Avenue closed its doors for lack of business.

"We created incentives to get developers to think about putting their next project in the downtown," says Wallace. "We need to

have people living in those buildings." This could of course mean more street-level activity and an active neighbourhood.

Towards a Vibrant City Core

Heney Klypak of Klypak Rusick Architects, who designed Rumley Distinctive Lofts, envisions the benefits of a larger downtown population.

"As soon as you get people living downtown, then the downtown develops a life of its own," he says. "You have more people, there are more restaurants opening, the night life becomes more active...I can see that in the area immediately around the Rumley and the Fairbanks. All of a sudden, there's going to be a concentration of activity in this area."

Gordon Doell, president of Obasa Group of Companies, the development company renovating Rumley Distinctive Lofts, observed what happened to its twin, located in the heart of Wichita, Kansas. Like



Saskatoon's warehouse district, Wichita's Old Town District contains a special combination of traditional warehouse and industrial buildings conveying the historic character of the past 100 years. Vancouver has a similar district, Yaletown, an easy walk from the centre of the downtown—transformed into a trendy urban community of residential, business, entertainment and services, and becoming one of city's most desirable areas.

"We are where Wichita was about 10 years ago," says Doell. "We've got a beautiful downtown. We've got the river downtown. We can definitely handle some increased population here."

Karl Miller of Meridian Development, the company refurbishing the King George Hotel, speculates a bright future for downtown Saskatoon.

"I spend a lot of time in Vancouver," he says. "It's my favourite city in the world—second to Saskatoon, of course. The reason I love going to downtown Vancouver is because there are people down there. It's ex-

citing to be around when there's lots of other people. That's what makes a downtown exciting."

Olstar Developments converted the old Fairbanks-Morse building to condominiums. Partner Peter Olson has already seen how the development has transformed the neighbourhood.

"Now that we've developed this place, there are people here, coming and going at all hours," he says. "The more [development] that comes down here, then the more attractive it's going to be."

Olson also sees great potential in the 25th Street extension and the area around the City Yards. "That area could flourish very nicely," he says.

The most striking visual changes to Saskatoon's downtown are occurring at street level. Loft conversions don't change our familiar skyline, but light in formerly dark spaces brightens and opens up the street—residential development in these buildings includes street-level retail and

Aerial Photos taken by an employee of the City of Saskatoon Land Branch in 2007. Aerial photos courtesy of City of Saskatoon.

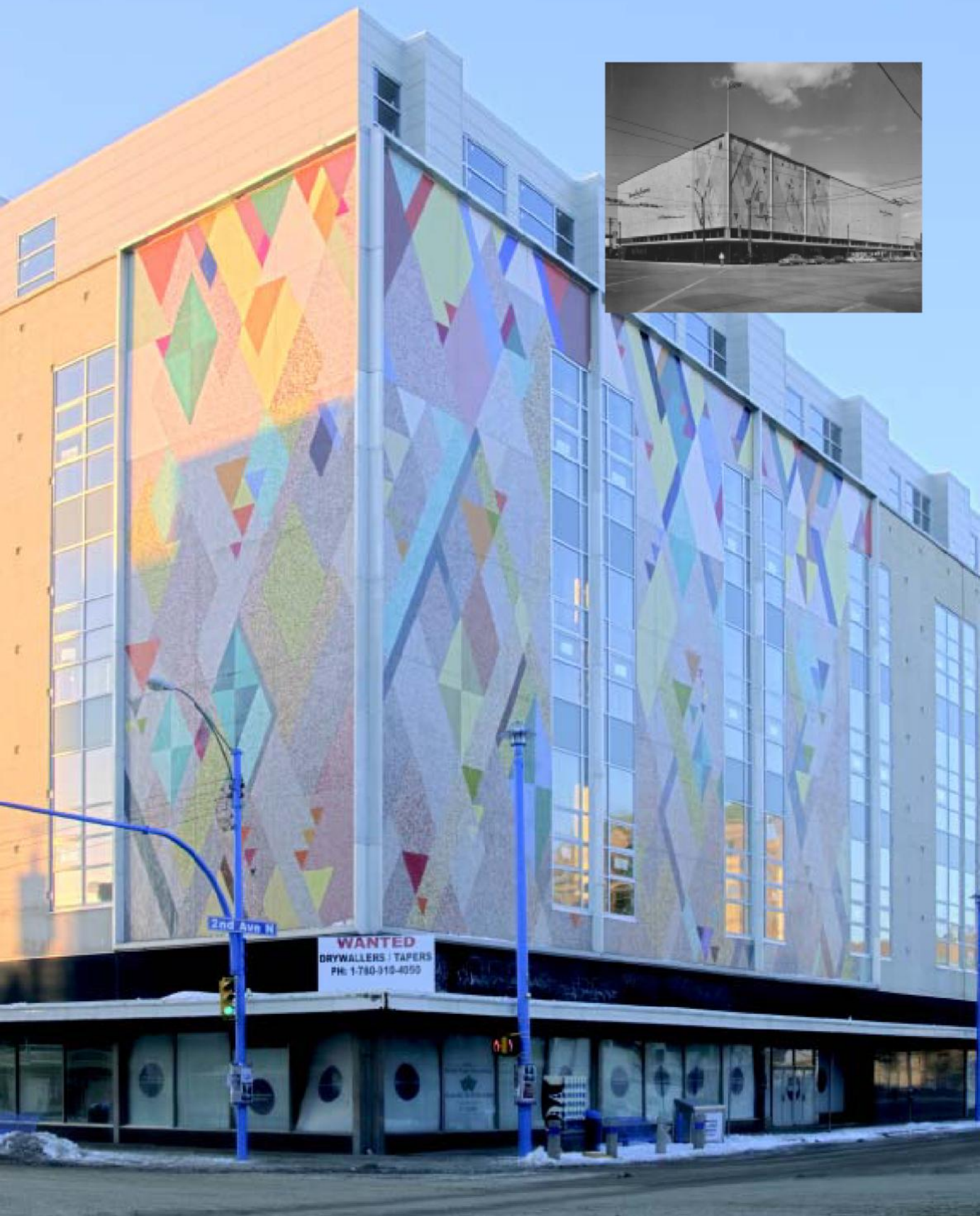
commercial development. Landscaping and other street features will draw attention to the area's heritage character.

"What you're going to notice is activity on the street," says Wallace. "When the Bay is done and the King George is done, we estimate 400 to 500 new people will live at that location."

"You're probably going to see some streetscape changes in the area, lots more activity and lights on at night. The Bay used to be a big, solid building with no windows. Now, it's going to have windows, light shining out. Same thing with the King George. It will change the appearance that way."

According to Wallace, there's two things you remember about a city—the airports and the downtown.

"You don't remember the Wal-Marts. You remember that the downtown had a 'look' to it." ■



Historic Department Store Transforms into High-ceiling Urban Residential Units

2nd Avenue

Those who always dreamed of living in a department store are now getting their chance. The former Bay department store on 2nd Avenue and 23rd Street has been morphed into 123 two-storey lofts – with retail and commercial space on the lower levels.

The Hudson's Bay Company originally purchased the former five-storey J. F. Cairns department store at this location in 1922 and occupied it for many years. Construction of a modern department store – the building currently on the site – began in 1959. It was built in two phases: the north half first, joined to the Cairns building which was demolished to make way for completion of the remaining half. The new store opened in 1960. The Bay operated it until moving into the former

Eaton's department store location in Midtown Plaza in 2000.

The empty structure was promoted, without success, for use as a bookstore, a movie theatre, a new home for the public library, public school board offices and a call centre. However, by 2005, it had been purchased and construction was underway for a conversion to residential condominiums. Edmonton architect Gene Dub, who has won awards for his loft conversions in other cities, designed the architectural plan.

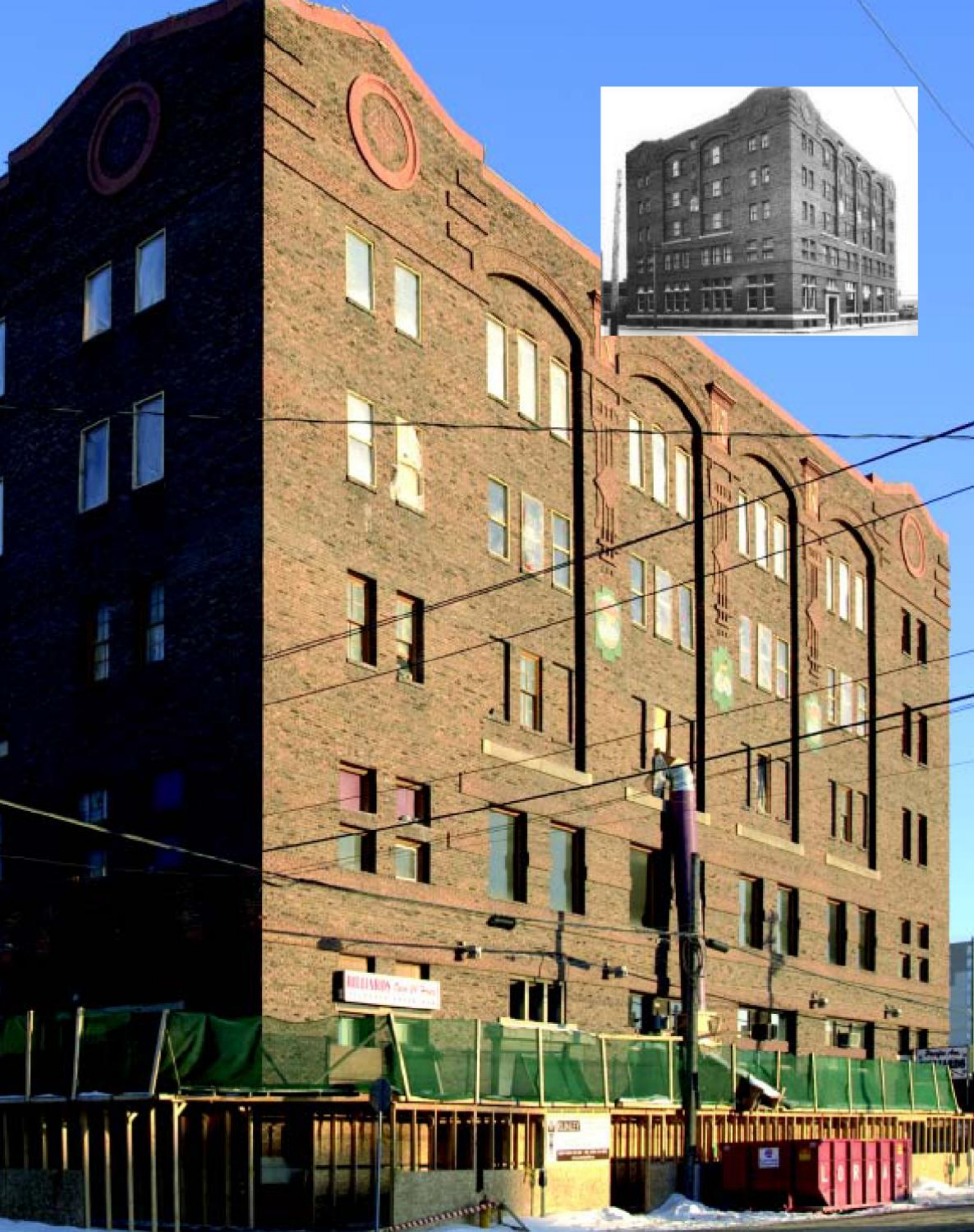
The former department store's exterior walls were opened to permit installation of two-storey-tall windows. The interior escalator shaft was converted to a central skylight and atrium that allows natural light into the centre of the building.

The 123 two-storey newly named 2nd Avenue Lofts range from 658 to 2500 square feet. Suites feature 18-foot ceilings, commercial-sized windows, open concept floor plans, balconies and underground parking. ■

Photos left and right: Two-storey window openings, an addition at top and central skylight and atrium are giving the old Hudson's Bay store at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 23rd Street a new, cosmopolitan look. The newly renovated building will open as 2nd Avenue Lofts, containing 123 two-storey residential loft condominiums featuring 18-foot ceilings and open concept floor plans.

Inset: The Hudson's Bay Store, with its modernist style and mosaic panels, has been a landmark in downtown Saskatoon since 1960. The department store chain moved to Midtown Plaza in 2000, but the building will re-open as 2nd Avenue Lofts later this year. Photograph PH934413 courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.





Ingenuity and Imagination Preserve the Historic Character of the

Rumley

Brothers Meinrad and Jacob Rumely founded the M. & J. Rumely Company in Indiana in 1853 and began producing threshing machines and other farm implements.

In 1912, the company extended its operations into Canada, announcing that it intended to construct a five-storey showroom and warehouse in Saskatoon.

The Rumely Company went into receivership in 1915, re-established itself as the Advance-Rumely Thresher Company, then was sold to Allis-Chalmers in 1931. The Allis-Chalmers Rumely Company occupied the Saskatoon building until 1960.

Since then, the structure, located at the corner of Pacific Avenue and 24th Street, at times has stood vacant as a succession of companies occupied it. By the time the con-

dominium conversion began, only the main floor was used.

The Rumely Building was designed by Chicago architectural firm Hill and Wiltsdorf. Winnipeg contractors Carter, Hall, Aldinger completed the construction. The floors, made of single concrete slabs at least nine inches thick, could support 650 pounds per square foot. On the main level, the ceiling rose 16 feet overhead. On the second, third and fourth floors, ceilings were 12 feet high. The roof was sloped inward for drainage, so that the fifth floor ceiling of 15 feet at the exterior walls declined to 13 feet at the centre of the building. Each floor was supported by distinctive columns. An elevator, 12 x 25 feet, could lift two steam tractors together, weighing up to 60,000 pounds. It was the largest freight elevator in Canada at the time of its construction. Huge windows on the main floor allowed plenty of natural light into the showroom and offices. There is only one other building like it, a nearly identical Rumely warehouse located in Wichita, Kansas. Two years ago, the Wichita warehouse was converted to condominium lofts.

The Saskatoon conversion, known as Rumley Distinctive Lofts (including phonetic alteration of the original name), will

consist of 24 warehouse units scheduled to open by the spring of 2009 – two show suites will be ready by the end of March, 2008. Suites range from 1527 to 2350 square feet on the upper four floors of the five-storey building.

Each unit has high, exposed ceilings, at least 12 feet, giving the living space an open quality. An addition on the south side of the building will accommodate some of the condominium space, as well as provide access to the basement parking area. Three of the fifth floor suites will have walk-up access to their own rooftop lofts with private decks. Another rooftop terrace will be accessible to residents of other suites in the building. The structure will retain its original entrances on the west side for commercial tenants on the main floor. The former freight entrance is being converted to a secure private entrance lobby for condominium residents. The development, inside and out, is designed to convey a distinctive, elegant style that respects the heritage of the original building.

“It has a lot of heritage value,” says Heney Klypak, a partner in Klypak Rusick Architects, who designed the Rumley lofts. “It’s untouched. It still retains all its original character and charm.”

Photo opposite: The Rumely Building, at the southeast corner of Pacific Avenue and 24th Street, is undergoing conversion to luxury residential warehouse lofts. The Rumley Distinctive Lofts are scheduled for occupancy in the spring of 2009. Residential suites occupy the top four floors, with retail/commercial space on the main floor.

Inset: The Rumely Building shortly after completion. The Rumely steam tractor company constructed its Saskatoon showroom and warehouse near downtown. Concrete slab floors almost a foot thick could support 650 pounds per square foot. Photograph A31 courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.



Converting the building to lofts, while retaining the personality and heritage of the original structure, took a bit of imagination.

"The building had all the original windows still in place, which was good for a warehouse, but it didn't meet the comfort requirements of today's needs for a home," says Klypak. "We had to replace all the windows. At the same time, it was our intent – and I think we were successful – to reproduce the windows in such a way that they mimic the style of the windows that were originally there."

Another challenge, says Klypak, was to find a way to incorporate the distinctive lofts into the structure.

To keep the six condominiums per floor an appropriate size, the architect had to design a 16-foot addition for the south end, but to do so in a way that would blend with the existing building. The south wall was intended as a temporary structure to permit future additions.

"The design of the addition had to be complementary to what's there now," he says. "You can try to match exactly what's there, but you can't get the exact same brick – it's just not available. You can get a pretty

close colour match."

Instead, Klypak decided to contrast it, but reflect the characteristics of the original building, such as in the mullions, the structural elements that divide the windows.

At ground level, the addition also helps conceal the ramps and provide secure entry and exit for the heated indoor parking. On the upper levels, the addition supports south-facing balconies for the suites.

There's no way the original elevator would meet modern building codes, but the space it occupied could be made into a distinctive feature. A large, modern passenger elevator, trash chute and services shaft take up part of the space. The remaining space has been converted into the living room of one condominium unit on each floor.

"They're one of my favourite features," says Klypak. "They're all done in brick. The old brick walls have been sandblasted, so we get this incredible feature wall that no one will have anywhere else. When we did the design, we were very respectful of what is here, what the building was all about."

For example, the architect discovered that the original windows were designed for future openings, but had been constructed

Saskatoon architect Heney Klypak designed the suites for Rumley Distinctive Lofts. Klypak's design highlights the historic features of the former warehouse, from the distinctive windows to the prominent columns. The exposed columns in the finished design give unique character to the space.

with bricked-in, knock-out panels.

"We wanted to get as much natural light into the condominium units as possible, so we requested the contractor knock out the panels so we can put additional windows into them. We're not adding anything to the facade, but we're putting a window where there always was a window planned."

Besides allowing more light into the units, the new windows allow for the conversion to meet modern building standards, such as requirements for an opening window as a secondary bedroom exit.

"A concrete structure is the best for sound privacy," says Klypak. "You don't get that hollow sound walking on the floor like wood-framed apartments. In this case, we've got the concrete floor, but we've also added a concrete topping to cover up some of the floor damage that was created by the tractors. It even has a colouring in the concrete, so it has a very unique look to it." ■

A Classic Hotel Transformed into an Eco-friendly, Parisian-style Luxury Condo Complex

King George



The stately King George Hotel – or simply the “KG” as it became popularly known – at the southwest corner of 2nd Avenue and 23rd Street was built during 1910 and 1911, making it the second oldest hotel in Saskatoon. It was designed by architect Frederick L. O’Leary and erected by Standard Construction Company for \$250,000. Originally planned for seven storeys, the completed hotel was five storeys with 140 bedrooms, including 65 with en suite baths. An annex with another 42 bedrooms and six “trade sample rooms” was added in 1912. The large ground floor rotunda, measuring 55 by 85 feet, was deco-

rated with ornamental plaster work. The basement held a barber shop and billiards hall.

The 16-foot ceilings of the main floor conveyed a spacious atmosphere. Second-floor ceilings were 12-1/2 feet high and ceilings on the remaining floors varied from 11 to 9 -1/2 feet, depending on the floor.

An extensive, million-dollar modernization in 1964 destroyed the “early Gothic” exterior of terra cotta and stone, replacing it with ceramic tile. Stone figures and original brick work were discarded, lost or destroyed. Further renovations, costing \$250,000, were undertaken around 1990.

The King George Hotel, during the building’s heyday, when the building commanded the centre of Saskatoon’s downtown. The building’s early Gothic exterior of terra cotta and stone was lost during renovations completed in 1964. Photograph LH776 courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.

In later years, the KG fell into decline. Standing vacant since 2003, mounting property tax arrears and a fire in 2004 nearly resulted in a city order to demolish the building.

The building was acquired by a Vancouver developer, and subsequently re-sold. The Saskatchewan Architectural Heritage Society added the structure to its watch list of endangered structures in 2006.

This building is so spectacular. It's going to have a real heritage look when we're done and it will look better than it ever did. We'll bring it back to that original splendour.



Meridian Development purchased the building in 2007 and began the task of rebuilding. Meridian's Karl Miller explains how the company plans to return the KG to a grandeur it hasn't seen in half a century.

The renovated King George will consist of a retail level facing 2nd Avenue and 23rd Street, office space on the second floor and 21 luxury residential condominium suites – ranging from 700 to 1550 square feet – taking up the top three floors. Sixty heated, secure indoor parking spots – including secure bicycle storage – will be available to all tenants. A rooftop terrace will provide views of the city.

Miller says he expects the renovation to be fully complete by mid-2009. Some suites could be ready for occupancy as early as the end of 2008.

"We're really excited about the project," he says. "We think it will help bring downtown further north – bring the excitement back. This used to be the hottest corner in Saskatoon."

"This building is so spectacular. The design work is going to give a real heritage look when we're done and it will look better than it ever did. We'll bring it back to that original splendour."

The developer is re-creating many of the details found in the original building. The company was fortunate to find examples of some of the early ornamentation, such as the

lions' heads, crests and iron canopies that adorned the facade. The pieces are being duplicated and reproduced so they can be returned to the building. Inside, castings were taken of ceiling mouldings saved from the grand rotunda to be used to re-create the look throughout the new development.

The remnants of earlier renovations are currently being removed and an entirely new facade will need to be constructed. The new exterior is intended to showcase the magnificence of the interior structure. Windows will extend from floor to ceiling, and column to column.

"It's going to be clad with a pre-cast stone product," says Miller. "All the columns will be rebuilt. We're going to put cornices on the outside. It will have a real Parisian feel when it's done ... yet, there are a lot of 'nods' to what it originally looked like, not the 1960s renovation that most people know it as."

The main floor retail level will exceed city zoning regulations. The renovated KG will provide continuous retail frontage along both 2nd Avenue and 23rd Street.

"All along 2nd Avenue, we're going to have two little retail bays," says Miller. "You won't even know that parking is behind there." (Access to the building parkade will be off the alley.)

The developer says it's important to maintain the 2nd Avenue street scape.

The former King George Hotel has seen much of its facade stripped away this winter, but Meridian Development expects this condominium conversion to renew the splendour of the building. Windows will extend from floor to ceiling and column to column, the columns are being rebuilt, and the exterior is to be clad with a pre-cast stone product. Meridian's Karl Miller expects the building to exude a "Parisian" atmosphere. The renovated building will have retail on the ground floor, office space on the second and 21 luxury residential condominium suites on the remaining floors. The building is scheduled to be fully occupied by mid-2009. The Fairbanks Lofts are visible as the four-storey structure at far right.

"What destroys a street more? People don't want to walk by parking lots. They want to walk by little shops."

Miller hopes that much of the retail space, especially facing 23rd Street, will attract tenants to serve Saskatoon's growing downtown residential population.

The residential suites are built using the great room concept, consisting of a living room, dining room and kitchen sharing a large space, says Miller. All but the smallest suites will have two bedrooms with two bathrooms.

Each residential suite will have an outward view of the city and an inward view of a landscaped terrace – the "green" roof atop the parkade.

The design of the parkade is integral to meeting environmental certification.

The new KG will be the first privately owned building in Saskatchewan certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) "green" building rating system, says Miller. In addition to the "green" parkade, the renovation is being conducted to minimize construction waste. Workers separate metals for recycling, and send concrete and brick to the city yards to be crushed for berm material or road base. "We spent a lot of time separating out various materials," says Miller. "We donated a lot to Habitat for Humanity. We recycled as much as we possibly could." ■

Light-filled Conversion Wins Heritage Award

T. Eaton



That grand old gentleman of a structure, the T. Eaton Warehouse, known as the Old Co-op Building, has come through many incarnations to win a prize. On February 11, 2008, the City of Saskatoon Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee announced that MFD Warehouse Restorations won the 2008 Heritage Award for Adaptive Reuse for

their loft conversion of this historic structure. The award was presented to James D. Zimmer Architect on February 19.

The original five-storey T. Eaton Warehouse at 211 Avenue D North was built in about 1915, with a two-storey adjunct on the north side added later. Eaton's operated a mail order office and groceteria in the build-

Photo above: A south-facing loft makes a comfortable and spacious home at the converted T. Eaton Warehouse building at 211 Avenue D North.

ing until about 1930. Over the years, it has housed the Dairy Pool and Federated Co-operatives, as well as other enterprises. The Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps occupied the structure during World War II.



The 14-foot ceilings of the first and second floors, and the 12-foot ceilings of the remaining floors made the heritage building attractive for one of Saskatoon's first loft conversions. MFD Warehouse Restorations, a group of three investors led by Mike Monachino, began the conversion by 2005. The first units were ready for occupancy by the latter half of 2007; two remaining units were nearing completion earlier this year. The restoration and modernization was projected to cost about \$4 million.

Jim Zimmer, of James D. Zimmer Architect, designed the 25 loft-style residential condominium suites.

In addition to their attractive heritage ambience, the lofts are light-filled, large and spacious. The original features of the east-facing walls, such as windows and columns, were retained. Walls were knocked out so balconies could be added to the north and south sides of the building. Suites on the north side of the third floor open onto roof decks on top of the lower addition. The west side was altered to convert former loading dock door openings to walls and windows.

"We tried to keep it so it so that it had the characteristics of the old building," said developer Mike Monachino, president of MFD Warehouse Restorations Ltd. "We tried to



make sure we didn't destroy the character of the building."

"When I saw the building I thought: We can make this an unbelievable spot for people to live. The building would be a cornerstone for that area, so people could see how that area could be brought back to life and be a super area to live in, with very unusual designs. In fact, we're building townhouses out in front that will be like a design we did in California. You can see how we take a new building and make it look like an old warehouse and give it the charm and characteristic that the Eaton building has." ■



The T. Eaton Warehouse has stood at this Avenue D location since about 1915. Since the 1930s, the building has housed a succession of enterprises. MFD Warehouse Restorations has now converted it to loft-style residential condominiums. The company also plans to construct live/work units in the vacant lot south of the former warehouse, where the three-storey addition once stood. Photo A338 by Leonard Hillyard courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.

Machinery and Mill Supply Warehouse Becomes

Fairbanks



Construction of a wholesale warehouse building at 12 - 23rd Street began in 1910. The Fairbanks-Morse Building, designed as a "modern mercantile style" by Montreal architectural firm of David Brown and Hugh Vallance, was completed in 1912. The poured, reinforced concrete con-

struction was designed to take heavy loads arriving by rail. The four-storey structure stands out in early photographs of the city skyline, towering over nearby buildings.

The building has seen a wide array of tenants during its long history. Owned and operated by the Fairbanks Morse Company, it

The Fairbanks-Morse Building, now Fairbanks Lofts at 12 - 23rd Street. The former warehouse has been converted to 12 residential condominium units on the top three floors. Tree Pottery Supplies occupies the ground floor.

was used as a warehouse for its machinery and mill supply enterprise, the largest of its kind in Canada, and later for the manufac-



ture of tractor engines. In 1949, it housed the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) general office, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and General Labourers' Union. An adjacent building held the Saskatoon Co-Operative Association, Saskatoon Co-Operative Society, and Saskatoon Cooperative Savings and Credit Union. From 1985 to 2005, the Fairbanks-Morse was home to AKA Art Gal-

lery, The Photographer's Gallery, Video Verite, and Tribe and Blackflash magazines. Tree Pottery Supplies has stayed in the building throughout its conversion to residential condominium suites, occupying the commercial space on the main floor.

Olstar Developments Inc. purchased the top three floors and basement from Tree Pottery in 2005 to build 12 residential condominium units, the first warehouse loft con-

version in Saskatoon. The Fairbanks Warehouse Condos sold out four months into construction. Luxuriously finished, they offer a contemporary open feel, high ceilings and lots of light, accented by heritage brick walls.

Olstar is currently converting another building on the property, facing Wall Street, to a single residential condominium unit. ■



Left: The Fairbanks-Morse Building in its early days. The building was completed in January 1912, in the "modern mercantile style". Saskatoon's first warehouse loft conversion, the building now contains 12 residential condominium units on the top three floors. Photograph LH803 courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room.

Above and opposite: The interior of #404-12, 23rd Street. Fairbanks Lofts is located near downtown Saskatoon. The former Fairbanks-Morse warehouse, which has seen many uses since its completion in 1912, now is home to 12 residential condominium loft units. Photograph by Jimmy Oneschuk, courtesy of Curtis Olson.



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The Room



Great Rooms Great for Entertaining

Today's new homes are very likely to be designed around a "great room" concept, combining more traditional spaces, such as kitchen, dining room and living room, into a single, open space. But what about older homes, built when

the functions of each of those traditional rooms was carried out in its own separate space?

Smaller homes, especially those built before the first half of the 20th Century, can benefit from renovations that create a more spacious, open atmosphere. Mondovi Developments tackled one such home, a one-and-a-half storey, 1130 square foot Buena Vista home built in

1929 on Kilburn Avenue. Like most homes of that era, the rooms seem small and cramped by today's standards. Renovations changed the entire character of the home's interior.

One of the benefits of the great room over compartmentalized spaces – and a prime reason that homeowners appreciate the concept – is the flexibility it offers for entertaining guests. Social trends

are seeing couples and families spending more of their free time at home. They would rather entertain in a domestic setting than socialize in noisy and crowded public settings.

The Kilburn Avenue home shows how modern room design can update older residences. It's the perfect setting for an intimate cocktail party with a few friends.



Bring Your Own Chef for Better Party Hosting

Let's be honest – entertaining's a hassle. You look forward to having friends over, but instead of spending time with your guests you end up running back and forth from kitchen to dining room to living room fetching them appy's and refreshments. You're lucky if you see or talk to anyone all evening. Or worse yet, you decide to make things easy on yourself by buying frozen appy's that are anything but appetizing.

That's where the personal chef comes in. With changing entertainment trends, hosts are finding that hiring such a person, someone who takes



charge of the kitchen and prepares the food, takes the pressure off. You get professionally prepared fare, whether it's an entire meal or just appetizers or dessert, customized to the needs of you and your guests. The personal chef also adds flair to your event, as well as an entertaining touch.

Your chef will want to meet with you beforehand, to discuss your event, your favourite foods, and even allergies and dietary preferences. They do all the shopping, cooking and cleanup, leaving you to spend time with your guests. Don't confuse a personal chef with a caterer. A personal chef designs a custom menu, from scratch, just for you and to fit your budget.

The Details:

Cocktail party location:
1105 Kilburn Avenue

Renovator:

Mondovi Developments
Box 2105, Saskatoon S7H 5N9
Owner: Susan Zwarych.
Phone: 306. 270.3807
Website:
mondovidevelopments.com

Room decor:

Esteem For The Home
College Park Mall
106B-3929 8th Street East
Saskatoon, SK S7H5M2
Phone: 306. 477.2833
Uncle Ed's Furniture
715 1st Avenue North, Saskatoon
306.244.2057

Baking:

Cakes G'lore
210 33rd Street West, Saskatoon
306.373.2253

Cabinetry:

T-Square Cabinets
Saskatoon SK
306.477.4777

Espresso machine:

Espresso Macchina
2209 1st Avenue North,
Saskatoon SK
306.955.8869

Art supplier:

Rouge Gallery
208 3rd Avenue South
Saskatoon, SK S7K1L9
Phone: 306. 955.8882
Website: www.rougegallery.ca

Personal Chef:

James. R. Kyle, Freelance Chef.
jamesrkyle@hotmail.com
306.249.5415
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Photo on page 41 (kitchen with table): Espresso Macchina: Gaggia Evolution Espresso Machine, \$500.00. Cakes G'lore: eight-inch cake, white fondant icing with red crystal sugar, \$48.95. Winners: Red fruit bowl with gold accents, \$29.99. Uncle Ed's Furniture: Cola Red Gloss Table with matching chairs, \$1299.00. Esteem for the Home: Abbott, decanter, \$44.99; Abbott, wine glasses, \$12.99 each; Torre & Tagus, small window platter,

\$29.99 each. T-Square: Espresso finished Maple cabinets with frosted glass windows, \$18,000. Rouge Gallery: Dream in the Night, 24"x 60" painting, \$4100.00.

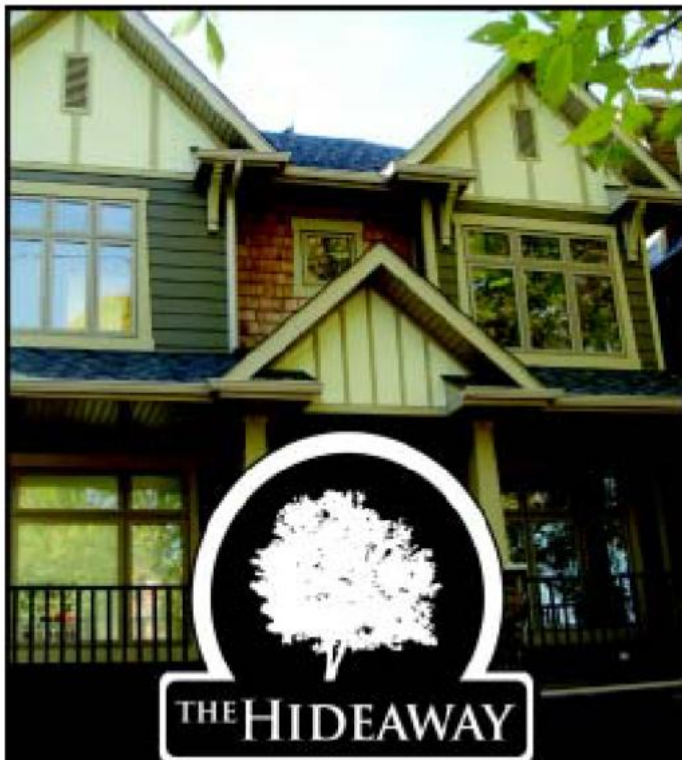
Photo on page 42(kitchen counter): Whirlpool matching appliances: Range Microwave, \$629.00, Stove, \$929.00, Side by Side Fridge, \$1449.00, and Dishwasher, \$649.00. Winners: Kitchen Aid, boiling pot, \$59.99;

Kitchen Aid, frying pan, \$29.99. London Drugs: Canister, \$12.99 each; Esteem for the Home: Torre & Tagus, small plate, \$16.99 each, Personal Chef James Kyle: Appetizers, \$25.00 per person.

Top left and right: The great room, even in a small home, is perfect for entertaining. Room supplied by Esteem For The Home. Art supplied by Rouge Gallery. Plates supplied by Esteem for

the Home. Glasses supplied by Esteem for the Home. Appetizers supplied by Chef James Kyle.

Above: Fresh, new look for a character home. Room supplied by Esteem For The Home. Art supplied by Rouge Gallery.



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Suppliers

Great Openings Exploring Door Options

Doors can be a simple upgrade, yet it could really renew the look of your home, at the same time lowering heating and air conditioning costs. All too often, we overlook the doors that we go through every time we enter or leave our homes.

Doors have changed a lot in recent years. Gone are the days of the all-wood doors used in our grandparents' houses. Featureless steel doors, common in so many homes, have been superseded by much better – and better looking – designs.

After 20 or 30 Saskatoon summers and winters, most doors are ready for replacement. Sun, rain, minus-30 degree temperatures and blizzards make our doors and their weather sealing warp, swell, shrink, crack, fade and generally wear out until they look terrible and just can't keep the cold out or the heat in like they used to.

Modern doors are a vast improvement over those that were available only a few years ago. They withstand the weather better, protect the home better, and look good doing it. Homeowners have



much more choice, too. Although doors pretty much tend to be made of the same materials – a wood door is as likely to have a steel interior as a steel door is to have a wood exterior and either style may have a foam insulation core – they're generally described in terms of what their surface is made of. A wood door is wood on the outside, a fibreglass door is fibreglass on the outside, and so on. Just remember, when it comes to modern doors, beauty really is more

A photograph in Architectural Digest two decades ago inspired Cheryl and Maurice Souloff to build a painted metal and cedar entry door for their designed home in Grasswood hamlet.

than skin deep. There's a lot happening underneath the surface.

Doors are also available in an almost bewildering array of styles and options, allowing homeowners to strike the right balance of cost, durability, performance, security and appearance.

"People are going with a fancier designed glass door in the

front of their homes nowadays," says Rick Engel at Saskatoon Co-op Home Centre West contract sales. "In the back, it's six-panel doors.

"Fibreglass is becoming really popular. There's smooth fibreglass which can be painted, just like the steel, and it's lighter and stronger than a steel door. There's also textured fibreglass, which can be stained to look like wood."

That makes fibreglass a good choice for owners of older homes, who want to keep a heritage or historic appearance. "If you wanted to, you could go through the expense of buying a wood door, similar to what you had, but they're extremely expensive," says Engel.

Fibreglass doors are more economical and can be made to complement the look of the home, especially when the right style of glass inserts are used.

Gary Sauser, assistant manager at Windsor Plywood, says that fibreglass doors are perfect for character homes. One series, the Barrington Craftsman Door Collection by Masonite, is made to resemble the style of three-panel doors found in older architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including

decorative stained glass inserts, says Sauser.

"They've even got the little shelves for your keys and stuff," he says. "They're made out of fibreglass, but all that wood grain that you see in wood, you see that in the fibreglass. You stain or paint it to make it look like a real wood door."

The entry door does more than enhance the outward appearance of your house. It can

also brighten the interior. Homes with small entry landings, in particular, can benefit from a newer door or from having a new insert installed into the existing one. Decorative glass door inserts are installed in openings cut into the door. Clear glass is common, but tex-

tured glass designed to protect the privacy of the home's occupants is becoming very popular.

An insert is an inexpensive way to alter the look of an entryway, says Sauser.

At the back of the house, many homeowners are replacing older patio doors with garden doors, says Engel. Sliding patio doors waste terrible amounts of energy.

Garden doors, which open on hinges, provide better weather sealing, better insulation and

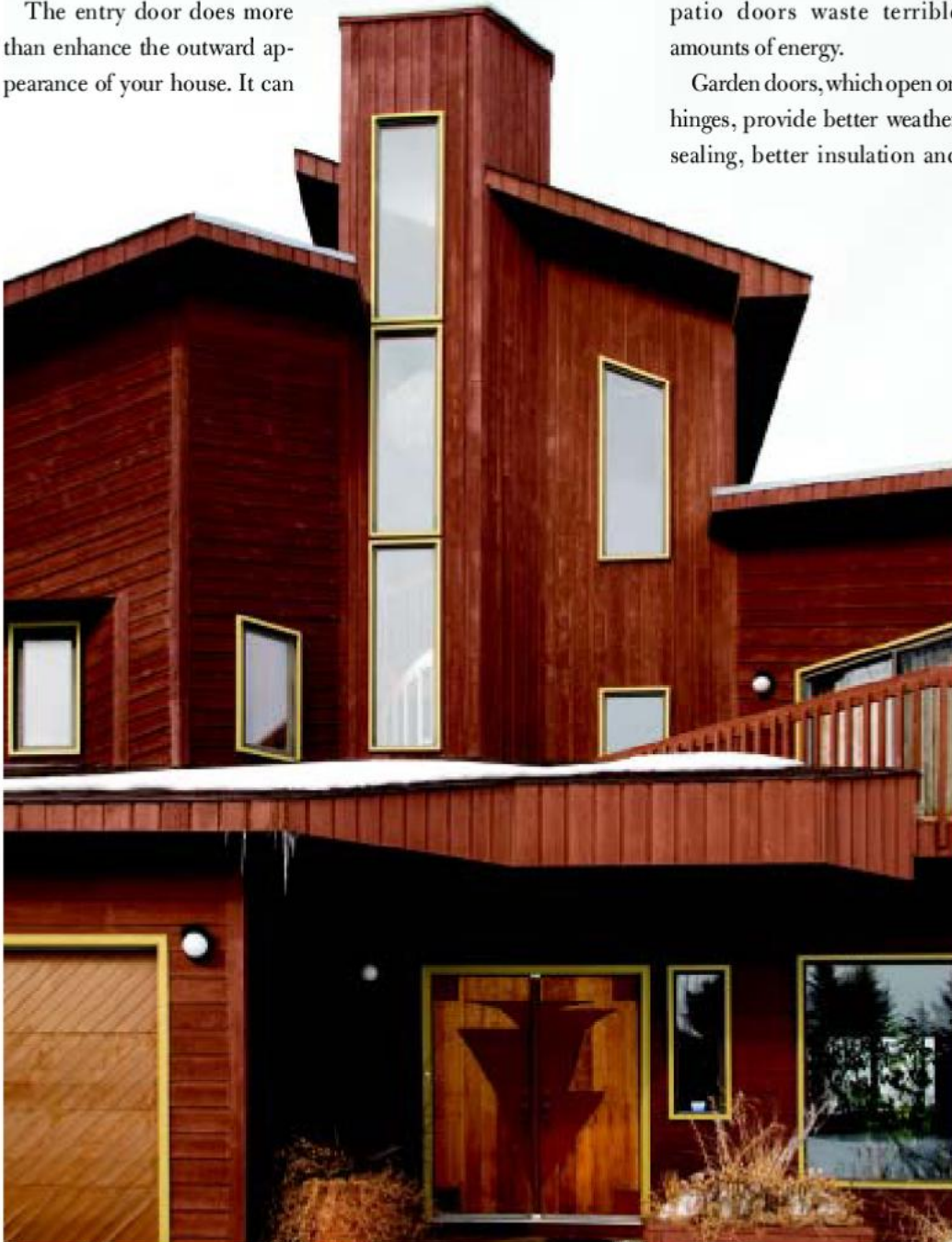
better security. Garden doors consist of an opening door on one side and a full-length venting window on the other. Door manufacturers make patio replacement units, designed to fit into the openings of existing patio doors, so replacement is easy and economical.

"The advantage of the patio door was that it had a large breezeway when you slide it open," says Sauser. "[With a garden door,] you don't lose that, but when it comes to winter or any time you're not using it, there's not dollar bills floating out of it either. They're an excellent setup, especially for Saskatchewan."

Contacts:

Saskatoon Co-op Home Centre West
311 Circle Drive West (at Avenue C North), 306.933.3835

Windsor Plywood
3222 Millar Avenue (north of 51st Street), 306.931.1232,
www.windsorplywood.com



Ecoliving

Improve Your Home Improve Your Energy Savings

The perfect time to beef up your home's energy efficiency is when you renovate. Did you know that over 60 per cent of the energy used in your home is used to heat it? If your home is over 25 years old, you can save over 35 per cent on your energy bills if you make your home more air tight, add insulation, upgrade windows and replace heating system.

Seal It Up

Before you replace your heating system, you should get rid of all those cracks in your building envelope that let cold air in. Typical places to draft-proof are around windows and doors, electrical boxes, vents and any other penetrations through an exterior wall. You should also replace worn weather stripping at doors and windows.

Keep the Heat In

Don't forget the old fireplace; it can suck the heat right out of your home. According to Natural Resources Canada, open fireplaces average between minus 10 and 10 per cent efficiency.

That's because large amounts of heated air go right up the chimney when your fire is a blazin'. Even when not in use, open-hearth fireplaces allow heated house air to escape and let cold air in.

Consider installing an efficient, clean-burning advanced combustion unit. Not only do they draw little air from your home, they give you more heat, burn less wood and give off less pollution.

Advanced combustion fireplaces are 50 to 70 per cent efficient. You'll find units especially designed that insert right into existing fireplaces. You will likely have to put a stainless steel liner in your chimney to make the system work properly.

Wrap It Up

You've sealed your home; now it's time to take a closer look at your insulation. Today's new homes typically use R-40 in the roof and R-20 batt insulation in the walls. Ideally, you'll want to upgrade your insulation to these values. Don't forget to insulate the basement walls. But before you insulate foundation walls, make sure they are in good repair and there is no sign of water. Fix all moisture problems before you insulate.

If new siding is in your plans, consider adding an extra layer of insulation and house-wrap air barrier before you apply new siding.

See the Light

Energy-efficient windows reduce that cold draft feeling you get from sitting next to a window. In general, windows are poor insulators – they let heat escape in the winter and let heat in during the summer. What you want to do is minimize windows on north walls and take advantage of the sun on south walls that will help heat your home in spring and fall. An example of an energy-efficient unit is one with double-glazing (triple-glazing even better), argon gas, low-e coating and insulated spacer. New windows can change the look of your home. For added comfort and privacy consider using window coverings.

Heat It Up

You've sealed up your drafts and increased your insulation; now, it's time to look at your heating and ventilation system. If you have gas, consider installing a condensing furnace. They are the most efficient gas furnaces on the market.

These furnaces have an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) of between 90 and 97 per cent, compared to older furnaces with AFUEs of about 60 per cent and modern standard efficiency units with AFUEs of between 78 and 84 per cent.

Homeowners with old gas furnaces can save about \$300 a year by switching to a condensing gas furnace with an AFUE of 96 per cent, according to Natural Resources Canada.

Freshen Up

Your new airtight home will need proper ventilation to remove stale air. This is done with the help of a heat recovery ventilator (HRV). Your mechanical contractor can help you with this.

Keep Your Cool

Summers in the Okanagan are hot, but even so, heating is the biggest energy expense in your home. So when shopping for a furnace and an air conditioner, spend your money on the most efficient furnace you can afford. After all, air conditioning only makes up three per cent of your home's energy use, according to Natural Resources Canada.

To reduce your air conditioning bill, consider installing ceil-



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Visit saskenergy.com for a list of SaskEnergy Network Members and program information.



ing fans, especially in the bedrooms. They circulate room air, providing a cool breeze in summer and in winter help pushdown hot air trapped in the ceiling space.

Turn It Down

Consider installing a programmable thermostat, which will allow you to preset your home's temperature for specific times of the day. In winter, you want to setback the temperature at night when you're asleep and during the day when you're at work.

As a general rule, you can save two per cent on your heating bill for every degree you turn down the thermostat, according to Natural Resources Canada.

However, you don't want to setback the temperature lower than 17 Celsius, this could cause condensation problems in winter and long heat up times.

But before you buy that programmable thermostat check the number of wires it needs and the number of wires you have. You might be able to pull a new wire through, but often you can't.

Hot Water

After space heating, hot water is the biggest energy user in your home. According to Natural Resources Canada, hot water makes up 16 per cent of your home's energy use.

Replace hot water heater with a condensing gas or propane unit. For increased efficiency, consider insulating hot water

pipes within ten feet of your water tank, and if possible, insulate all accessible hot water pipes. This will improve water temperature at the tap. If your tank is located in a cold basement, consider adding a blanket of insulation (always check manufacturer's recommendations).

You can also get drain water heat recovery systems that reclaim heat from water that goes down the shower drain and uses the recovered heat to preheat water entering hot water tank. Solar hot water systems and instantaneous water heaters are other energy efficient options to consider.

Opt Not

Appliances like fridges, freezers, electric ranges, dishwashers and washing machines are another area where you can save money on your energy bill. Today's fridges use one third less energy than a fridge made in 1984. But whatever you do, don't use your old fridge in the basement or garage and lose your energy savings. And don't buy a freezer unless you plan on using it. Always look for the EnerGuide label when comparing and buying major appliances.

■ KAREN SLIVAR

Showcase

Modern Meets Traditional Award-winning Design

Meridian Development's The Hideaway, at 320 11th Street East, won this year's Municipal Heritage Award for Infill Public/Commercial.

You might think that a place has to be old to win a heritage award, but this development shows that heritage is a style that transcends age. The award recognized the manner in which the infill development project was sympathetic to maintaining the character of a neighbourhood.

"The award was given for the design, use of the site, and integration of the project into the surrounding neighbourhood," says Meridian president Karl Miller.

The architectural style closely matches the character of the neighbourhood. From the street, you'd never know that the property holds eight separate homes. Only four face 11th Street. From an entrance between the houses on 11th Street, sidewalks from the houses at the rear of the property converge at a gate in a wrought iron fence supported by stone pillars.



"They all gather at that main entrance, where we have a hand-carved stone sign," says Miller. "Actual stone masons – old-world stone masons – hand-carved that sign, on site. They did just a wonderful job."

From the entrance, curved sweeping walkways lead into the property. Two bridges cross dry creek beds that serve to catch run-off from rains, part of the development's xeriscaping scheme.

The Hideaway kitchen and dining area. The open concept design blends modern and traditional. Photo by Colleen Wilson

"The focus there was to do really different landscaping, so that it wasn't like every other project out there that's just got grass and shrubs," says Miller. "We wanted to make it feel like a little resort, something really unique and different."

"These little dry creek beds wind throughout the entire

property, around the houses. That's why you have these bridges leading to the different houses."

Low-voltage landscape lighting is created in a copper arts and crafts theme, adding to the ambience and character of the site.

Inside, the homes are unlike anything found elsewhere in the city. Meridian was striving for a modern design, yet one that brought with it more traditional elements.

"Colleen (Wilson, Meridian's designer and partner) and I made them with today's comforts and features – gas ranges, granite counter tops, big kitchens and open floor plans on the main floor," says Miller. "We tried to leave it completely wide open so that the living, kitchen and dining area flows all as one. That's probably the biggest change from the old designs, where they had every single room separated individually."

"All the millwork packages in the house were handcrafted on-site," he says. "Everything was custom milled – the baseboards, the window casings, the door casings, all the wainscoting. The finish carpenters made every one of those pieces on-site."



"We did things like coffered ceilings, with copper accents set inside. Oil-rubbed bronze fixtures give a classy, elegant, traditional look."

Coffered ceilings add an old-world touch to the interiors. The copper insets, not something you'd expect to see in Saskatoon, provide a unique accent.

It's that attention to detail that has attracted buyers to the homes. Anyone who's seen the homes remarks on it. It's easy to see why.

"Every little thing is thought through," says Miller. "There's so much detail that you need to go through it a couple of times just to notice it all." ■

Left: The Hideaway, on 11th Street East. Four homes face the street. Another four are behind, creating a resort-like ambience. The exterior of each home at The Hideaway is designed to integrate the new buildings into Saskatoon's most traditional neighbourhood, an approach for which the project received a municipal heritage award. Photo by Colleen Wilson.

Top left: The dining area shows the detail of the home. Oil rubbed bronze fixtures, coffered ceilings with copper insets, hand-milled wainscoting and window casings add to the traditional style. Photo by Colleen Wilson.

Top right: A bedroom at The Hideaway. Coffered ceilings, copper accents and oil rubbed bronze fixtures give a classy, elegant, traditional look. Photo by Colleen Wilson.

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Tipsheet

Painting Made Simple

The Easiest Way to Transform Your Home

Applying a coat of paint is the easiest and most inexpensive way to transform any room in the house, however deciding on the right type of paint and colour can be a challenge. The following tips can make any room in your home beautiful:

1. What is the right paint finish?

There are several types of paint finish to choose from, such as flat, satin, eggshell, semi-gloss, latex, alkyd and many more.

To choose the correct finish for your project start by considering how the room will be used and the people using the room. An elegant flat finish may not be the best choice for a child's room or other high-traffic areas like the kitchen, but is ideal for a ceiling, living room or an area in which you want to hide imperfections in the wall. A higher sheen paint such as satin, eggshell or semi-gloss is usually easier to clean, so it's great for hallways, children's rooms, kitchens or bathrooms.



2. Is primer necessary?

Primer acts a pre-coat and will prepare walls for paint by blocking grease, water and smoke stains that can prevent proper adhesion. Primer also helps to

ensure a smooth and uniform painting surface.

3. How many coats to apply?

If you're covering a light-coloured surface, you may only re-

quire one coat of paint, but generally, two coats of paint provides good coverage. By starting with a deep-base primer with superior hiding and excellent

Walls in warm, natural tans lend a soothing quality to any room.

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sealing properties, you can help ensure good paint coverage.

4. How much paint is required?

To establish the square footage of your room, simply multiply the total length of the walls by their height, allowing for windows, doors and other areas that won't be painted. To cover a 350 to 400-sq ft. room you will need one gallon for each coat of paint. And don't forget it's a good idea to buy a little extra paint in case you need to make any quick touch-ups later on. **Tip:** As an environmentally friendly paint option, look for those with no or low volatile organic compounds. These chemicals are harmful to the environment and also contribute to that heavy paint smell that can cause headaches in a freshly painted room.

5. Choosing the perfect paint colour

Before buying paint colours, test an area of the room to see if it will create the look you are trying to achieve. Choose a paint line with practice pots that allow you to buy a small amount of the colour you like and try it on the wall at home. That way you get a sense of the colour and texture in your space before painting the entire space.

Paint Colour Trends for 2008

1. The global palette: Influenced by the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Russia and Latin America, shades are rich bronzes, purples, deep reds (think borscht) and passionate pinks.

2. The eco palette: Think nature – various shades of green, earthy browns, tans, flower hues and sky blues.

3. The urban palette: The techno-cosmo sensibility makes these colours popular for modern loft living: charcoal greys, cayennes, subdued oranges and aquas.

4. The heritage palette: These colours adorned turn-of-the-century homes – burgundy, forest green, grey and brown. ■

Practical

Permits and Programs City Hall Has What You Need

Before you run for the crowbar or pick up that sledgehammer, it's a good idea to check to see what kinds of residential renovations you can get away with, and whether you need a permit before you begin. Your first stop is City Hall to visit Saskatoon's Building Standards Branch in charge of permits and inspections. You get a building or plumbing permit before starting any work, and inspections during and after construction. The city's inspectors enforce the Building Bylaw, the Swimming Pool Bylaw, the Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act, Canada's National Building Code and Saskatchewan Plumbing and Drainage Regulations.

The nature of the project and the scale of work determine whether or not you need a permit.

In general, if you're simply making repairs or replacing worn-out pieces of your home, you don't need a building permit. For example, you don't need one for:

- fences, driveways and sidewalks
 - cosmetic repairs such as paint or minor repairs to exterior finishes
 - replacement roofing on a one to four unit dwelling unless the decking is replaced
 - replacement siding on a one to four unit dwelling, as long as the replacement is with similar construction
 - carpet or cabinetry
 - replacement doors and windows in existing openings, as long as the replacement is with similar construction
- If your work involves alterations or construction, you'll probably need a building permit. You definitely need one for:
- residential and commercial construction, including new building construction as well as alteration and renovation of existing structures
 - demolition, repair, relocation, alteration or addition to an existing structure
 - alterations or construction of accessory buildings, garages, decks, swimming pools, and mobile homes
 - structural changes to existing buildings
 - change of occupancy or use of an existing building

- accessory buildings that are greater than 10 sq. m.
- decks over 200 mm above grade, and roof enclosures over existing or new decks
- basement development in existing dwellings.

If you're not sure if your project needs a permit, check with the Building Standards Branch before you start.

You don't need a permit to clear a clogged drain, repair a leaky water pipe or replace an existing fixture such as a faucet, valve or water heater.

You *do* need a plumbing permit to make more extensive changes. It's the law: "A plumbing system may not be constructed, altered, extended, renewed or repaired unless a plumbing permit has been obtained for the work." Only a licensed plumbing contractor registered with the city can apply for a permit and carry out the job. It sounds bureaucratic, but it's for your own and the public's safety.

Get a building permit application from City Hall. You can pick one up in person or download one from the city's website, www.saskatoon.ca/org/building/

Fill out and send in the Residential Permit Application. Better yet, go down and fill it out in person, where city staff can help

with the process. Include the required plans (see below). You may need Ventilation Design Sheets for some projects. You'll need pre-Engineering Shop Drawings for engineered joists, beams and trusses, usually provided during framing inspection.

It usually takes about a week for your application to be processed, assuming you've provided all the information requested. Complex projects, large developments and projects with incomplete plans may take longer. It also takes more time during peak season (May-July), when the city typically receives large numbers of applications. Pay the fee when you pick up your permit and approved plans.

If you need a plumbing permit, your contractor will know what to do.

Sometimes it's helpful to have a designer involved. For some projects, the city demands it. A designer doesn't always have to be a professional engineer or architect, but must meet city acceptance for the project proposed. Complex projects require a professional engineer or architect licensed to practice in Saskatchewan. The Building Standards Branch will let you know if you need to hire a professional.

Every project that requires a

building permit will also require inspections by city building inspectors. The city will let you know when inspections are required.

A "variance" is a request to deviate from current zoning requirements. If granted, it permits you to use your land in a way that is ordinarily not permitted by the zoning regulations. It is not a change in the zoning law but a waiver for your circumstances. The city may permit minor variances for alterations not exceeding 10 percent of the zoning bylaw, such as minimum distance of a building from the lot line or

the minimum distance of a building to another building on the lot. The city has an application form for minor variances, available in person or as a download from the city's website.

Programs that Promote Preservation

Most Saskatoon residents have heard about the city's Façade Rehabilitation and Renovation Grant program, or have seen what it can do. It helps commercial property owners rejuvenate their buildings' faces to the public, conserving our built heritage

and enhancing our urban environment. There is also a civic program for homeowners.

The Heritage Conservation Program helps private property owners conserve buildings, natural environments, archaeological and/or paleontological sites. Property owners may apply for Municipal Heritage Property designation or for listing in the Community Heritage Register.

The program offers support mechanisms (including financial assistance) which help owners conserve the property appropriately, and protection tools which safeguard heritage properties.

Even if you don't live in a heritage property but still consider your home to have character, the city offers advice on renovating character homes and can guide you in researching its history.

Hiring professional renovators or licensed architects can be of great value in any renovation or development project. These professionals have working

knowledge and experience with zoning regulations and building codes that can save you time and money. Most importantly, they understand how to preserve or recapture the character of your home and its place in your neighbourhood.

For more information on the city's programs, visit the Development Services Branch in City Hall or the city's website. ■

Contacts:

Building Permit Information

Contact Building Standards Branch

www.saskatoon.ca/org/building/

building_standards@saskatoon.ca

Phone: 306.975.2645

Development Services Branch

www.saskatoon.ca/org/development/

Phone: 306.975.2645

City bylaws:

City Clerk's Office

2nd Floor, City Hall

www.saskatoon.ca/org/clerks_office/bylaws/

Phone: 306.975.3240



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Backwords

Time for a Change

Downtown Regeneration
is a Positive Direction

The trend of converting former commercial and industrial buildings to upscale residential dwellings is not uncommon to many Canadians who live in large cities. The trend started many years ago in cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. However, there is now a firmly established market for this style of dwelling in small and medium-sized cities like Saskatoon.

The once-bustling economic engine of the city produced large, solidly-built factories and warehouses made of concrete and brick. Once the production factories for such things as steam powered tractors, are now being purchased and converted, at considerable cost, to unique urban dwellings. Close to former rail yards, these buildings are also within walking distance to a revitalized urban core with amenities such as shopping, parks, new waterfront, street scenes and restaurants.

The conversion trend started slowly in Saskatoon. The modest conversion of the former Handicraft Supply store on 2nd



Avenue by a local developer proved that conversion of former commercial space was viable. It was the spark needed to get the trend going. Conversion of the heritage designated Fairbanks Morse Warehouse from former industrial space into 12 residential dwellings and commercial space on the main floor by a local developer in 2006 was the first full-scale conversion of its type.

There are now four major conversion projects underway in Saskatoon's downtown – a former retail building (The

Bay), hotel (King George Hotel), factory (Rumely Building) and warehouse (T. Eaton Warehouse) are now in various stages of conversion to residential and mixed use. The total investment in these four conversions alone is estimated at over \$36 million dollars.

The importance of new dwellings to the health of the city's downtown cannot be overstated. For example, a large area of Saskatoon's downtown was generating no economic activity, and several buildings faced the possibility of demoli-

tion. Now, the City estimates at least \$400,000 of new property taxes will be collected from the conversion projects annually. The new residents of these conversion projects will be a relatively young, professional population with above-average incomes. They will demand more services and entertainment close to home. The new conversion projects are also setting some of the highest price points ever seen in Saskatoon. The average price of a premium dwelling in the newest conversion project is expected to be \$650,000.

Saskatoon's downtown is characterized as a large area with a relatively low concentration of dwellings. Add to this, the numerous surface parking lots spread throughout the core and the task of creating a truly urban feel in downtown Saskatoon remains a significant planning challenge.

The City estimates at least \$400,000 of new property taxes will be collected from the conversion projects annually.

Developers are enticed to consider new downtown residential projects and conversions with significant financial incentives. The Saskatoon City Council understands the time

consumption, high cost and higher risk associated with such projects, and offers many substantial incentives to ensure they are completed – funded from reserves which receive revenue from parking meters.

There are many reasons to be optimistic that the trend towards downtown living and more conversion projects will continue. Demographically speaking, the large segment of retirees expected by 2016 are projected to seek a vibrant, central location close to amenities, and events catering to an active, social lifestyle.

For the foreseeable future, Saskatoon's downtown will continue to change. Successful conversion projects are a significant part of the overall revitalization being witnessed today in this area. A new River Landing waterfront development, new street scape enhancement projects in Riversdale, on 3rd Avenue and 19th Street, and a new transit terminal are all public investments which will ensure the private investment continues in Saskatoon's vibrant new core. ■ **ALAN WALLACE**

Alan Wallace is the City of Saskatoon's manager of neighbourhood planning. Photo courtesy City of Saskatoon.

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